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C O N F I D E N T I A L AMMAN 008137

SIPDIS

CPA ALSO FOR DARRELL TRENT/FRANK WILLIS
TREASURY FOR ZARATE AND DEMOPULOS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/04/2008

TAGS: [EAIR](#) [EFIN](#) [ETTC](#) [IZ](#) [JO](#)

SUBJECT: IRAQI AIRCRAFT IN JORDAN: FALCON 50

REF: AMMAN 6222

Classified By: Deputy Chief of Mission, David Hale. Reasons 1.5 (b) and (d)

Action request at Para 4.

¶1. (C) Senior CPA Transportation Advisor Darrell Trent has urgently requested Embassy Amman's assistance in returning to Iraqi control a Falcon-50 executive jet (tail number HB-IES).

It has been sitting on the tarmac at Amman's Marka Airport since March 2003, collecting demurrage charges and slowly degrading from lack of use and maintenance. According to the Jordanian Civil Aviation Authority (CAA), the jet is registered in Liechtenstein to a Swiss company called Aviation Services, but was used by members of the former Iraqi regime to travel between Amman, Baghdad, and Europe. This suggests to the GOJ that the airplane is an asset of Iraq that should be seized under UNSCR 1483 and either returned to the control of the new government or sold with proceeds deposited in the Development Fund for Iraq (DFI).

¶2. (C) However, although it suspects Iraqi government ownership, the Jordanian government has no substantive information. To protect itself legally, the GOJ does not want to take action until instructed or requested by the Swiss company that is the registered owner of the airplane and/or by Liechtenstein as the place of the aircraft's registration (reftel). To date, Jordan has received no such communication from the governments of Switzerland or Liechtenstein. (We understand that Embassy Bern has discussed this issue extensively with Swiss and Liechtenstein authorities.)

¶3. (C) In a recent development, Trent told us December 13 that Iraqi Transportation Minister Boulos had secured the assistance of Amman-based members of the Iraqi Khawwam family to re-register the aircraft in Sierra Leone in the name of Iraqi Airways. Armed with this new registration, the head of the Amman office of Iraqi Airways asked CAA's assistance in checking the aircraft for traces of radioactive materials -- given rumors that the plane was used to transport such material -- prior to release the airplane to Iraqi Airways. (Interestingly, the Iraqi Airways official apparently has obtained the keys to the airplane, probably from its former Jordanian pilots who were employed by Aviation Services.)

¶4. (C) COMMENT AND ACTION REQUEST: It is not clear what sort of title to the aircraft, if any, was presented in Sierra Leone, but, in any case it is unlikely that this new piece of paper will satisfy the legal requirements of the Jordanian government. However, the CAA is ready to ask for the Jordanian Royal Scientific Society's technical help in checking for radiation traces. It seems unfortunate that an asset (est. \$7 million) of the former Iraqi regime whose condition and value is steadily deteriorating due to lack of use remains unutilized after nine months. This is doubly true at a time when most commercial air service between Baghdad and the outside world has been suspended for security reasons. The airplane could, as Trent prefers, be put to good use in transporting the growing stream of official Iraqi and CPA travelers, or it could be sold, with the proceeds added to the DFI. Post is ready to work with the Jordanians to get this plane back to Iraq as quickly as possible and requests guidance.

GNEHM